

Amendments to the Specification:

Insert the following new paragraph before “Field of the Invention” at page 1, line 3:

This application is a continuation of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/648,678, entitled “Apparatus for Dispensing Tickets” and filed September 20, 2000. The disclosure of the above-identified patent application is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

Replace the paragraph at page 5, lines 2-16, with the following amended paragraph:

The apparatus 10 for dispensing a selectable number of tickets 12 from a plurality or stock of serially joined tickets (not shown) includes a platform 14 along which the tickets 12 are constrained to travel toward a discharge opening (not shown) in the apparatus 10. First roller means 16 is supported on platform 14 for engaging the joined tickets 12 and advancing them in a forward direction F toward the discharge opening. Cutting means 18 which includes a table ~~cutting disc is supported on a~~ cutting disc 20 is supported on the platform 14 for cutting adjacent joined tickets 12 along a cut line 22. A controller ~~(not shown)~~ 23 in the form of a programmable controller is mounted on a circuit board held within a cavity ~~(not shown)~~ formed in the underside of platform 14. The controller can be connected to an input device for allowing entry of a selected number of tickets 12 to be dispensed, and controls the roller means 16 and the cutting means 18 to advance the joined tickets a distance in the forward direction F commensurate with the selected number of tickets to be dispensed and cut the selected number of tickets from adjoining tickets so that the selected number of tickets can be dispensed through the discharge opening.

Replace the paragraph at page 6, lines 4-11, with the following amended paragraph:

The motor 42 is operable for driving the cutting disc 20. To this end, an output shaft of the motor 42 ~~passes through the support wall 26~~ extends into the support wall 24 and has, fixed to its end, a drive sprocket 44. A toothed belt 46 engages the drive sprocket 44 at one end and turns about an idler sprocket 48 at an opposite end. The idler sprocket 48 is rotatably mounted within the wall 26. A pair of parallel and spaced apart rails 50 and 52 extend between walls 24 and 26. The lower rail 42 52 extends parallel to and behind the cutting line 22 and is disposed close to the upper surface of the platform 14. Belt 46 extends between the rails 50 and 52.

Replace the paragraphs at page 7, lines 7-22, with the following amended paragraphs:

A load/unload button 74 is also accessible through a hole in the upper surface of the platform 14. The button 74 is also connected to the controller and operates in a toggle manner so that on a first depression, it operates motor 28 to drive the rollers means 16 in a manner to load tickets onto the platform 14 and when depressed again, it reverses a rotation of the motor 28 and roller means 16 to unload the tickets from the platform 14.

Referring to Figure 2, the apparatus 10 also includes a ticket guide 76 for constraining lateral motion of the tickets 12, removably mounted on or in the upper surface of the platform 14. The guide 76 is generally in the form of a rectangular block provided with a length 78 of reduced thickness 78 which together with the opposing surface of the platform 14 forms a channel or gateway 80 for the tickets. The ~~length 78~~ channel or gateway 80 is marginally longer than the width of the tickets 12 dispensed by the apparatus 10. The guide 76 is slidably mounted in the platform 14 by the provision of interengaging ~~rebates~~ recesses 82 formed in the platform 14 and laterally extending flanges 84 formed along the opposite lower edges of the guide 76. In this way, the guide 76 can be replaced or interchanged to suit the width of the tickets 12 being dispensed.

Replace the paragraph at page 8, lines 9-17, with the following amended paragraph:

The operation of the apparatus 10 will now be described. Initially, ~~the~~ a housing (not shown) within which the apparatus 10 is held as opened and a supply of tickets 12 placed within the housing. The forward most ticket is passed through the gateway 80 and held between the rollers 36 and 38. The load/unload button 74 is operated to cause the rollers 36,38 to rotate in a direction so as to grip the forward most ticket and advance the tickets in the forward direction F. The housing is then shut. When it is desired to dispense one or more tickets 12, the number of tickets to be dispensed is input into an input device that communicates with the controller via the communication port 86.

Replace the paragraph at page 9, line 9 to page 10, line 4, with the following amended paragraph:

Now that an embodiment of the present invention has been described in detail it will be apparent to those skilled in the relevant arts that numerous modifications and variations may be made without departing from the basic inventive concepts. For example, an additional, second set of

rollers may be provided on the side of the cut line 22 opposite the first rollers means 16 for the purpose of assisting in the ejecting of the cut tickets. Also, the foot 64 can be extended to extend, and indeed be fixed between the walls 24 and 26, and the bottom of the carriage 54 provided with a recess so as to slide over the foot 64 as it moves in opposite directions along the rails 50,52. Also, two or more apparatuses 10 may be connected in parallel by appropriate coupling of respective communication ports 86 so that a dispenser can dispense dual rolls or stocks of tickets. It is envisaged that the apparatus 10 will be connected with for example a cash register at a supermarket so that a purchaser of products from the supermarket can at the checkout purchase a number of tickets 12 with the purchase being made via the cash register which in turn can send instructions via communication port 86 to the controller to dispense the purchased number of tickets. Indeed, the apparatus 10 can be coupled with say a barcode scanner and used in the promotion of a particular product so that for example when a person purchases a particular product and that product is scanned through the barcode scanner at the checkout the scanner sends instructions to the controller to dispense a predetermined number of tickets. Also, the controller can arrange to maintain a count of tickets dispensed and the number of tickets remaining. The precise configuration and componentry of the controller are not important or critical features of this invention. The controller may be constructed using known electronic design techniques and practices and off-the-shelf components. All such modifications and variations together with others that would be obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art are deemed to be within the scope of the present invention the nature of which is to be determined from the above description and the appended claims.